DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 832 RC 014 259

AUTHOR	Stoessiger, Rex
TITLE	Progress Report of the Tasmanian Education and Local Development Project.
INSTITUTION	Tasmanian Education Dept., Hobart (Australia).
PUB DATE	Aug 82
NOTE	25p.; Paper presented at the National Education and Local Development Seminar (Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, August 7-8, 1982).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Attitudes; Community Leaders; Construction Programs; *Cultural Context; Economic Development; *Educational Development; Educational Opportunities; Enrollment; Facility Improvement; Foreign Countries; *High Schools; Physical Education Facilities; Principals; *Rural Development; *Rural Schools; *School Community Relationship; Secondary Education; Social Environment
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia (Tasmania); Education and Local Development Project

ABSTRACT

As part of Australia's Education and Local Development project, Tasmanian researchers investigated whether the upgrading of district schools to district high schools had contributed to the social, economic, and cultural development of the local areas. For three selected areas (Glenora, Sheffield, and Ouse), researchers gathered financial and enrollment data and interviewed administrators, staff, community leaders, and parents. In all cases, a marked increase in the importance of the secondary section of the schools accompanied the upgrading. Million-dollar, multi-stage physical improvement programs were either in place or projected for each school. All three schools, especially Glenora, showed solid staffing gains since the upgrading and teachers were more highly qualified. Sheffield interviewees agreed that the upgrading was of definite economic importance to the area, noting that the school newspaper made a cultural contribution and that school events offered social opportunities. Ouse interviewees noted some economic benefits to traders but few cultural or social benefits. However, the community utilized the school's new sport facilities. Probably because the Glenora school serves a dispersed area, interviewees there cited fewer economic, social, and cultural influences from the upgrading. Opinion of the educational quality in all three schools was mixed. (SB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED233832

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE TASMANIAN EDUCATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Rex Stoessiger
Research Branch
Education Department of Tasmania
HOBART Australia

Paper presented to the Australian National Education and Local Development Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, 7 - 8 August, 1982.

RC 014259

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Helen Holling
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE TASMANIAN EDUCATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

RECEIVED JUL 1983 ERIC/CRESS

Education and Local Development (ELD) is the title of an OECD/CERI project which seeks to investigate the relationships between education and development activities in rural communities.

The OECD/CERI project is investigating:

(i) the role education may play in creating the pre-conditions for development and as an agent directly stimulating employment opportunities;

(ii) the implications for local development of the trend towards using education principally as a means of individual mobility;

(iii) the degree to which and the ways in which policy-makers from both education and development agencies need to work together to achieve development aims (1).

TASMANIAN INVOLVEMENT

The Education Department of Tasmania became aware of the implications of the ELD project early in 1980 and subsequently agreed to join the National Steering Committee. Tasmania felt that it was too late joining the project to contribute to the total project but agreed to undertake a case study on some aspect of rural education.

Initially it was proposed that the case study would be aimed at improving the situation of young school leavers using information gained from the study of school leavers in country areas (2). However, this proposal proved impractical given the time and finacial resources available. The study finally adopted was of the upgrading of existing rural district schools to district high schools (DHS).

OUTLINE OF THE CASE STUDY

1. Aim - To investigate if the provision of full secondary education in selected district high schools had contributed to the development of the local areas.

   In this context development was to be interpreted widely and would include economic, social and cultural aspects in particular.

2. Information Collection - The information collecting stage of the project would consist of the following stages:

   (i) Selection of three or four district high schools, in different areas, which had been upgraded from district schools at different times.

   (ii) Interviews with the principals and a few staff members to collect personal accounts of how and why the school had been upgraded and its consequences.

   (iii) Collection of information on the additional Education Departmental expenditure (buildings, salaries etc.) resulting from upgrading.

   (iv) A questionnaire to school staff members designed to find out how they contribute (economically, socially and culturally) to the local area.

   (v) Interviews with significant people in the local community (shop-owners, councillors etc.) on their perceptions of the benefits of the upgrading of the DHS.

   (vi) Interviews with a sample of parents to find out how the DHS upgrading has benefited them and their community.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

Government supported secondary education first came to rural Tasmania with the establishment of secondary classes at Scottsdale in 1922. This remained the only case until, influenced by the depression years of the early 1930's, the Education Department established two area schools in 1936.

Area schools brought together students from the surrounding smaller primary schools to provide a general post-primary education suitable for children in rural areas. Area schools were to teach skills and values that would be valuable to the rural community. A 1942 report(3) stated that "The area school has become a rallying port for parents - a social and community centre as well as a place where the children learn the practical ways of life".

The late 1950's saw the establishment of comprehensive high schools and by 1963 several such schools had been established in urban areas and four area schools had lost their primary classes and become comprehensive high schools. Catering for the more academic children, the high schools attained a higher status than the area schools. It has been suggested that "... an unintended and unwanted consequence of the establishment of the comprehensive high school was the decline of many area schools".(4)

After an enquiry in 1968 the name 'area school' was dropped and all schools with both primary and secondary classes were called 'district schools'. By this time, six of the 42 district schools offered secondary education to year 10 (as in the high schools).

In 1976 a committee was established to recommend on the extension or phasing out of the secondary sections of individual district schools. This committee recommended in 1978 that most of the district schools be upgraded to provide full secondary education to the end of year 10(5). These kindergarten to year 10 (K-10) schools were to be called 'district high schools'. Six schools were to have their secondary sections phased out and become primary schools.

It is local areas which have had schools upgraded to district high schools either as a result of the 1978 report, or earlier, which are of interest for the present study.

SELECTION OF STUDY AREAS

Three areas were chosen which have had schools upgraded to K-10 schools at different times:

(i) Glenora is a very small centre in the Derwent Valley, about 50 km North-West of Hobart (see map 1). Glenora District High School is one of the six schools, mentioned above, that already offered Education to year 10 by 1968. It is in the centre of Tasmania's major hop growing area but also serves mixed farming and timber cutting regions.

(ii) Sheffield is a small country town in North-Western Tasmania, 35 km South of Devonport (see map 2). It is the centre of a prosperous mixed farming region and services a hydro-electricity scheme further inland. Sheffield District High School was originally Sheffield Area School which was one of the two initial area schools established. It had been effectively upgraded to a K-10 school before the 1978 report.

(iii) Ouse is a small centre higher up the Derwent Valley than Glenora. It is about 70 km from Hobart (see map 1). Ouse District High School became a full K-10 school as a result of the 1978 report. The school serves a prosperous sheep farming region as well as the villages associated with the hydro-electric schemes further up in the valley.

ENROLMENTS AND BUILDINGS

The upgrading of District Schools to District High Schools has usually been associated with an increase in enrolments and a program of new buildings.

For the first schools to be upgraded the programs are well underway, while for those upgraded as a result of the 1978 report, the building programs are just beginning.

The three schools studied in detail had a core of old buildings dating back to the original Area School with a series of more recent additions. The resulting effect, of a mixture of building materials and different architectural styles, is generally unattractive. Little attention appears to have been given to the aesthetics of the overall school site. However, the school principals seemed to be pleased with their newer buildings, although the disruption caused at one school by construction work all through the winter months was most unwelcome.

The detailed building programs associated with the school upgradings are as follows:

(a) Glenora District High School. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of students in the school decreased from 460 to 324. This loss has been entirely from the infant classes, with the secondary enrolments remaining steady in numbers while, as a proportion of enrolments they increased from 38% to 59%. The decrease in overall numbers reflects the decline in rural employment in the area, and the mechanisation of the hop industry in particular. The increased importance of the secondary section of the school has resulted from its upgrading to full high school status. (A wide range of highest level (Level III) Year 10 subjects has been offered since 1972).

In 1970 the accommodation in the school consisted of twelve permanent and four temporary classrooms, a library (used as a classroom), six specialist rooms and a gymnasium. The temporary classrooms were described on the offical return as "musset huts" in "shocking condition".

The smaller numbers in 1980 were in twelve classrooms plus a double class unit with nine specialist rooms plus a hall, canteen and library. The double class unit, to replace the temporary classrooms, was built in 1971 and was followed by a technical block in 1973. The major redevelopment of the school started in 1977 with the building of two science laboratories, a canteen with a dining room, staff hostels and principal's residence. This involved an expenditure of $700,000. The complete upgrading of the school is expected to cost an additional half-million dollars. The next stage is an extension to the technical block.

Glenora is classed as a disadvantaged school and receives funds under the Disadvantaged Program of the Australian Schools Commission. The canteen/dining room development was largely funded from this source as has been several minor works (e.g. converting a woodshed to a pottery room).

The upgrading has obviously been of vital importance to Glenora. Without it, the even greater decrease in school enrolments would have made it very difficult to justify new building programs and may even have put the very existence of the school in jeopardy.

(b) Sheffield District High School. Sheffield effectively became a district high school after the majority of parents decided to send their children there in 1977. Prior to this the more able students were sent by bus to the high school at Latrobe (25 km away). In 1976 of the 436 students, only 58 (13%) were in secondary classes. By 1980, the total enrolment had grown to 603 with virtually all the increase in the secondary section which had 203 pupils (34% of enrolments).

In 1976 the pupils were accommodated in twelve classrooms, nine specialist rooms plus a canteen, hall and library. In 1980, there were thirteen classrooms, eight portable classrooms (terrapins), nine specialist rooms plus the canteen, hall, music room and library. In other words, the increased secondary enrolments had been accommodated by the provision of eight portable classrooms. A major redevelopment of the school costing about one million dollars is projected. The first phase of the development, a new library, new administration section and two new classrooms, was due to start in 1981 but has been postponed for twelve months.

(c) Ouse District High School. The District Schools Report in 1978 recommended that Ouse be upgraded to a full district high school because pupils from the towns in the upper Derwent Valley had no alternative access to secondary education.

In 1976, the school had 164 pupils with 55 (34%) of pupils in the secondary section. By 1980, the school had grown to 202 pupils due to an increase in secondary enrolments to 91 (45%). The principal expects the primary enrolments to remain steady while the secondary enrolments increase to about 160.

In 1976, the school was accommodated in six classrooms with four specialist rooms and a library. By 1980, two terrapins (portable classrooms) had been added and a teacher residence was being used as a classroom. There were still four specialist rooms and a library, but a sewing room had been converted to an art room. The principal reported that the portable rooms had been made permanent by bricking them in, and were quite satisfactory. A new gymnasium was due to be completed by the end of 1980 at a cost of $300,000. Since 1976 a Principal's residence has been built at a cost of $60,000. There are plans for a complete redevelopment of the school to cost

just over one million dollars. The first stage of this development is for a library, remedial room, canteen and staff rooms. It was scheduled for 1981 but has been postponed for twelve months.

In summary the upgrading of the district schools has been accompanied by a marked increase in the importance of the secondary section of the schools, which seem likely to grow to about 60% of school enrolments. There is also a program of physical upgrading which will involve about a million dollars worth of new buildings in each school. However, these programs will come in three or four stages and are vulnerable to delays from government funding cutbacks and changes in priorities.

STAFFING

For a district school to offer secondary education of comparable standard to that offered in high schools it must have more staff. In particular, it must have specialist staff to cover the range of subjects the high schools provide. In the initial stages this specialist staff has often been provided by part-time or itinerant teachers, with full-time appointments coming after student numbers had increased over three or four years.

(a) Glenora. In 1970 Glenora District School had 20 teachers plus a principal for its 460 pupils. Nine of these taught primary classes and 11 at the secondary level. By 1980, with only half the primary enrolments and the same secondary enrolments, the school had 26 teachers plus a teacher/librarian, vice principal and principal. As well there was the equivalent of 3 full-time teacher aides. Six teachers were assigned to primary classes and seventeen to secondary ones. The proportion of three and four-year trained teachers had increased from one quarter to nearly three quarters (the remainder being two-year trained or less).

(b) Sheffield. In 1976, the District School had 15 primary teachers, 7 secondary teachers, 4 part-time specialist teachers (1 full-time equivalent), a part-time librarian, a principal and two half-time teacher aides. The 1980 staff consisted of 16 primary teachers, 17 secondary teachers, a teacher/librarian, vice principal, principal and 4 teacher aides (2 full-time equivalents). During this period the proportion of three and four-year trained teachers increased from 40% to 70%.

An increase of 22 primary pupils was accompanied by 1 extra teacher, while the extra 145 secondary enrolments resulted in 10 additional teachers and a vice-principal.

(c) Ouse. In 1976, Ouse District School was staffed with 4 primary teachers, 3 secondary teachers, a principal and 4 part-time (½ teacher equivalent in total) specialist teachers. There was also 1 teacher's aide (½ time). By 1980, there were 5 primary teachers, 6 secondary teachers, the equivalent of 1½ part-time specialist teachers, 1½ teacher aides, a teacher/librarian and a principal. An increase of only 36 secondary enrolments had been accompanied by an additional 5 secondary teachers. The percentage of three and four-year trained teachers increased from 43% in 1976 to 78% in 1980.

Some of the staffing increases described above are due to improved pupil/teacher ratios. For example, the pupil/teacher ratios for all Tasmanian secondary pupils increased from 16.2 in 1970 to 14.0 in 1976 and to 11.9 in 1980. This is a 25% improvement in ten years, whereas Glenora, with constant secondary enrolments had increased from eleven to seventeen secondary teachers (plus a teacher/librarian and vice principal) in the same period.

Sheffield, by contrast, has not done so well. The additional 145 secondary pupils would be equivalent to 12 extra teachers, whereas the school staff

has increased by 10 teachers and a vice principal. As mentioned above, the secondary staffing at Ouse has increased markedly and is at a rate well in excess of the increase in staff generally.

In conclusion, it is clear that the upgrading of these district schools to district high schools has resulted in many more teachers being employed in the rural areas. In two of the three cases studied, the increase in staffing has been well above the average for the whole of Tasmania. At the same time, the proportion of more highly qualified teachers has increased markedly. The consequences of these changes for the schools and their local communities will be discussed later.

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

To gauge the extent to which the school contributes to its community, a sample of local residents was interviewed.

This sample was obtained from several sources. Firstly, the school was asked to suggest people who they believed would be worth interviewing. Secondly, a sample of local business people were contacted directly. Thirdly, some local service agencies such as the Child Health Clinic, Library, Council etc. were approached.

(A) Sheffield

1. Economic Importance

All the interviewees were asked if they believed that the presence of a full district high school in the town rather than, say, a primary school, was of economic importance to the local area. The answer was overwhelmingly in the affirmative. The main reasons given were:

(i) It attracted residents to the region. This was mentioned by the Council Clerk, a bank manager and some of the shopkeepers. These people stated that the area was a growing one, attracting

residents from city areas who were buying rural blocks, hobby farms and so on. It was believed that the new people would not be readily attracted to the area if full high school education was not available or if it necessitated long periods of bus travel. One commented, "It's a status symbol for the town that encouraged people to settle in the region".

(ii) It benefits local traders. Although not all local businesses were agreed that the effect was important, most felt that the presence of the D.H.S. boosted their trade. The greatest boost came from special events held at the school which brought parents to town but the importance of students, teachers and parents shopping after school was also mentioned.

(iii) The school staff bring money to the area. Several of those interviewed noted that the school was the biggest employer in the town. Not all teachers live locally but it was considered that a majority live in the region and use local services.

(iv) The community newspaper produced by the school has economic importance. This newspaper is delivered to every home and is the only regional paper for the area. It will be discussed in more detail later. It was used by most of the local businesses for advertising purposes. However, several noted that they advertised mainly to support the paper rather than to increase sales. Others felt that the cost of advertising and irregularity of pulication made it of little value to their businesses.

(v) Using a closer school was considered to save money for families although school bus travel is provided free, parents pointed out the costs involved in travelling to school sport and special functions at a more distant school.

No economic disadvantages of having a local district high school were mentioned, although this was not probed in any detail.

2. Cultural Significance

When asked what the school contributed culturally to the local community, the first (and, in many cases, the only) response was the community paper.

This paper is produced monthly by the school as a community newspaper and delivered free of charge to all residents. It is the only local newspaper for this region. Many people considered it to be very valuable. It provided local news and advertising while its listing of local events is used by a wide range of community groups. Some of the comments made included:

"The paper is of immense value. It provides local information and advertising available in no other way and gives a free listing of local functions".

A local businessman commented:

"I used to advertise in the school's newspaper but it became too expensive now everything is tight. It's a very good paper. Everyone reads it".

A less typical response was:

"The newspaper started as a good idea but there are problems with students spending too much time working for it. I watched three girls wandering up and down town just to collect a small amount of information".

The only other cultural activities mentioned were an annual drama festival and one or two Adult Education classes organised from Devonport. These were not highly regarded by the residents interviewed.

3. Sport

Those interviewed had little to say about the schools contribution to sporting activity in the local area.

Some mentioned that school facilities were available for community use but most were unsure of any cases of this occurring.

Serveral residents mentioned the "anti-competitive" attitude of the school, and two people felt that this had spoilt the recent swimming carnival. One commented:

"There are some areas where the school philosophy of non-competition leads to mediocracy. For example sporting representatives are selected on a basis of representation not competence..... The result is a real downgrading of school spirit".

The one area of local sporting excellence mentioned was the hockey team which had half its players in the State team. However, this was felt to be due to the efforts of a local resident rather than a reflection on the school.

Some of those interviewed mentioned that a meeting had been called to consider ways of obtaining more sporting facilities for public use. At the meeting the possibility of a joint school/community gymnasium or youth centre was to be discussed.

The only sporting contribution of the school staff mentioned was to the softball team.

It was generally felt that the advantage of a local high school for sport was that parents could more readily take part in school sporting carnivals, team competitions and such like.

4. Social Contribution

Several of those interviewed regarded the major social contribution of the school to be the parents' committees and meetings that are held. However, these meetings do not involve a large proportion of the local population.

The general view expressed was that although the school staff generally lived in the area they tended to stick together and were not particularly involved in the social life of the town or in local clubs or community groups. The Principal was mentioned as the exception to this.

It was mentioned that school events brought people together and had the potential to help knit together the local community. The school newspaper was seen as having a major role in encouraging social interaction and local community identity.

The lack of activities for young people was mentioned by several residents. There is obvious potential for the school to take a lead in this area and this may well be happening with the discussions on a gymnasium or youth centre mentioned above.

5. Educational Advantages

Obviously a school's contribution to the local community is principally an educational one.

The majority of those interviewed saw several advantages of the local district high school. The size of the school (compared to large urban high schools) was seen as an advantage. Students in the primary section of the school were seen as advantaged in having classes with specialist teachers. Less bus travel for students was seen as a good thing in itself but also as an educational advantage in that students arrived fresher at school and had more time for activities after school.

Several of those interviewed had recently employed local high school graduates. Two were not impressed with the quality of those interviewed. One noted that the job applicants could not spell the names of nearby towns, another commented on their lack of initiative and inability to use a calculator. A third felt there was no difference between the local graduates and those from other schools.

The general community appraisal of local education varied considerably. One commented:

"I found the Year 10's very impressive and understand that the college reports of those going on are very favourable. I do not know of any who are unemployed. But the community doesn't believe it. They think that when the local students go on to college there will be a disaster".

Another opinion was:

"I watched two others go through (an urban Catholic secondary school) to compare with mine. Their work was no comparison, the others had much higher standards. I would be much happier if the district high school had regular tests and homework that was always marked".

In a limited survey of this type it is quite impossible to assess the significance of the different attitudes expressed.

There was some community dissatisfaction with the quality of the school facilities. The lack of a good film room was noted by one regular visitor and the temporary classrooms were mentioned by others.

One person felt that the school served an important educational role in bringing contemporary urban attitudes and values into the rural community.

Two of those interviewed felt that it may be an advantage for students to change schools after Year 6 and mix with a wider group. One of those

who was in charge of a local children's home felt that many children from the home were better served by moving to a new school after Year 6 where they were less likely to be labelled and had an opportunity to make a new start.

Other Comments

A number of other matters raised in the interviews are worth noting.

One resident felt that students who were bused out of the area have two, almost separate, lives. That they form their own group and are "half-in, half-out of the local community".

The local Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) was very appreciative of the district high school The school was making facilities available to them and the careers' teacher was very helpful.

One view expressed was that the presence of a local high school provided an opportunity for the community to influence the secondary education offered which it would not otherwise have.

Work experience was mentioned by several employers as a worthwhile feature of the district high school.

Virtually all the parents interviewed mentioned that the school had a friendly atmosphere and that they felt welcome to visit.

(B) Ouse

1. Economic Importance

The local business people all reported that the district high school benefited their trade. This was not due to students who were reportedly not permitted down town during the day but from teachers and to some degree from parents. Some traders mentioned increased business when there was a sports carnival or other special event on at the school. One

trader received direct benefit from the school as a customer.

2. Cultural Importance

Those interviewed had little awareness of a cultural contribution of the district high school. A few mentioned successful Adult Education classes and one recalled a drama group that no longer functions.

3. Sport

The local residents expressed considerable interest in the new sporting facilities at the school, in particular, the swimming pool and the gymnasium. The comments ranged from the wish that these facilities be made available to the general public through to a confident expectation that this would be the case. The school tennis courts have been used by community members.

One parent expressed appreciation that parents had been encouraged by the school to take over the municipal school sporting association and organise inter-school sporting activities.

Some teachers were reported to have been involved in playing badminton and golf locally.

4. Social Contribution

Local residents felt that the teachers as a whole did not mix socially with the community. The exceptions mainly being teachers married to local residents. Single teachers were thought to live locally during the week and go off to the city for weekends. One younger resident commented:

"You can't blame them for not mixing socially, there is hardly any social life here for single people anyway".

Some residents felt that the larger number of teachers associated with

the district high school may have encouraged them to stick together more and form their own social group.

Two residents saw the school as helping the local community by bringing parents together so that they got to know one another better.

5. Educational Advantages

Several people commented that the school had been upgraded to a district high school too recently to judge educational advantages. Similarly several people commented that when the school "builds up its name" or "proves it is high school standard" then it will be of great benefit to the region.

Several of those interviewed commented on the good education offered in the primary section of the school and how students sent off to independent schools in the city found themselves more advanced than their classmates.

The major advantage of the local school was in saving the need for a long bus trip or alternatively of having to send children off to board.

One resident felt that the upgrading has meant:

"...more input from parents into the school. They can go to meetings more easily and discuss their children's well being with the teachers and so on".

Another resident felt that the primary school was benefiting from the additional teachers in the secondary section because:

"...my child, in Grade 2, is learning French which is very good and the Art teaching is excellent".

The overall attitude of parents towards the education provided seemed

positive and very supportive of the upgrading of the school to a full district high school.

Other Comments

One parent reported that she used the school library to help with an external studies course.

A bus owner felt that his bus run was now more secure with the increasing numbers of pupils going to the local school.

A parent who was very pleased with how his children were performing in the primary section of the school still intended to send them to a city private school for their secondary education. This was partly because of a family tradition and partly because:

"I feel they won't be pushed hard enough at the secondary level".

(C) Glenora

Glenora District High School is not situated in a clearly identifiable rural centre as are the other two schools. It is on the fringe of a scattered settlement, strung out over several kilometers of highway. There is a small shop, post office and petrol station, each about 2 kilometers apart. This means that the school is not really part of a nearby local community but serves a dispersed region.

1. Economic Importance

With no nearby town, the school does not make as obvious an economic contribution to its region. Certainly the three businesses mentioned above readily saw the value to them of the local school. The only other economic consequence mentioned was that the lack of a local secondary school and the distance to a high school would mean that many students would have to board during the week. Few of the school staff live in the local region, many commute from Hobart.

2. Cultural, Sporting and Social Importance

Despite the lack of a significant local town, the facilities of the District High School are used and valued in the region it serves. The school tennis courts are used casually while the oval is the home ground for the regional cricket team. The school hall has been used for badminton and the hall-canteen complex is used for wedding receptions. There were few examples given of cultural events conducted through the school and only the occasional Adult Education class was mentioned. The school does provide opportunities for people (particularly women) from outlying areas to come together which would not otherwise occur. This happens both at school functions and through organised groups such as parents and friends meetings.

3. Educational Significance

While most of the people talked to had some reservations about the school, most felt it had a "good name" and several compared it favourably with other secondary schools in the wider region.

One local resident felt that the school was not as good academically as the High School but also stated that this was not the general view in the area.

One employer was disappointed with the school leavers he employed as casual labourers. His particular criticism was their lethargy and lack of enthusiasm and initiative. However, he felt that this was probably true of most schools. He also reported that it was difficult for girls to find work in the area and that several were having children when only sixteen or seventeen.

Two parents mentioned the lack of education beyond Year 10 as a particular difficulty for students wishing to go on to further study. Students wishing to continue have to board in Hobart.

A new arrival in the region (from N.S.W.) was very impressed with the equipment and resources provided at the school.

4. General

The difficulties for a rural school to make a major contribution to its region are most apparent in this case. The school's contribution to a diverse and scattered region is likely to be small (apart from teaching students) unless major efforts could be made by the school itself to provide a focal point for regional activities. Yet without a local centre the school is unlikely to get any encouragement for this role and even the teachers will be unwilling to live locally when even the few facilities and activities of a country town are not available.

Discussions with Glenora Staff

Following the preparation of the bulk of this report it was circulated to the schools involved for comment.

As a result of this Rex Stoessiger visited Glenora District High School for a meeting with the school staff.

Teachers who lived in the local area reported that there had been a marked drop off in local activities over a number of years. One new resident had found it difficult to make contact with the local community, partly due to a lack of an obvious focus for the area.

Staff reported that their school leavers were well thought of as employees, particularly by large employers further down the Valley.

The school had recently taken two initiatives that had local development consequences. The first was to survey parents about the possibility of establishing a creche. The second was prompted by the need of an unemployed leaver, doing voluntary work in the school, for typing practice. The school was advertising her availability for hire to do small amounts of typing.

Several suggestions were made about activities that the school could undertake to assist the local community. These included holding Adult Education classes and seeking to have senior secondary classes (years 11 and 12) offered through the school.

It was agreed to be worthwhile for some group in the school to continue to discuss and possibly implement some E.L.D. ideas, with the support of Research Branch. The Principal suggested the school committee developing submissions to the Disadvantaged Schools Program would be suitable as it included community representatives.

REFERENCES

1. Education and Local Development, O.E.C.D./C.E.R.I. Paris, 1979

2. Stoessiger, R. Leaving School in Rural Tasmania, Education Department of Tasmania, 1980

3. The Tasmanian Area School, Education Department of Tasmania, 1942

4. The Future of District Schools in Tasmania, Education Department of Tasmania, 1978, p.8

5. ibid, p.27